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EAGLE INSIDER

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC FOUNDATION



A Look Inside of Georgia Southern Athletics

December 7, 2020



Eagle Nation,

I pray this note finds you and your family safe and healthy. It was great to be back in Paulson this past Saturday night as we beat Florida Atlantic University, 20-3. Our defense played lights out, allowing just a second-half field goal to lead the way. Combined with our offense tallying 269 yards on the ground and Khaleb Hood returning a punt for a touchdown to earn Sun Belt Special Teams Player of the Week honors, it was a solid team win over an FAU team that came in 5-1. Night games in Paulson are special, and this past Saturday night was no different. I look forward to seeing many of you this weekend as we host Appalachian State at 6 p.m. in our final home game of the season.

I would like to thank our student-athletes for persevering over the last several months in the face of adversity. While the scheduling of games this fall has been a roller coaster of sorts, collegiate athletics has provided a sense of normalcy. I know this season has been unlike any you have experienced, yet you adapted, showed grit, and remained vigilant every week to position yourself (and your team) to play. 2020 will ultimately serve as a growth opportunity for all of us. Out of 130 FBS football teams across the country, only four teams are on track to play a regular 12-game schedule and they all are in the Sun Belt: Georgia Southern, Arkansas State, Troy and Texas State. We also already wrapped up volleyball, men's and women's soccer and cross country as fall sports. The fact we have been able to play so many events is a testament to how our student-athletes and staff are doing right in regards to safety and health protocols.

Both of our basketball teams opened their seasons on Nov. 25. Our men's team is off to a 3-0 start with challenging non-conference games against Davidson and Mercer this Friday and Sunday, respectively. Our women's team is back in action this Saturday at home against Coastal Georgia so if you're in town for the football game, you should come over at noon and catch some basketball. I would strongly encourage you all to make your way to Hanner in the near future as both teams' best basketball is ahead. We had Coach Burg on Tuesday Talks two weeks ago

and we'll have Coach Howard on tomorrow night, so I encourage you to follow us on Facebook ([@GSAthletics](#)) to catch my conversation with her at 5 p.m.

In other news, men's golf ended the fall with a No. 11 national ranking by GolfStat. [Carter Collins](#) has one of the deepest and most talented squads in program history and this spring has the potential to be very special. Rifle posted its highest national ranking (No. 19) in program history on Nov. 24 as it hit the halfway point of its season and also recorded its first Top-20 win in program history. Volleyball picked up a big win over Troy in pool play of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament and the future is bright for Coach Willis' program.

I was excited to announce the hiring of our new women's soccer coach, [Chris Adams](#), on Nov. 24. Coach Adams comes to Statesboro after 19 seasons with the University of North Georgia (UNG), where he tallied a record of 199-98-28. During his time at UNG, he reached double-digit wins in 11 straight seasons and made the postseason a regular occurrence with six trips to the NCAA Tournament in the past nine years and making the Sweet 16 in 2016. I am very confident that Coach Adams will take our women's soccer program to new heights never reached.

Our new LED lights at Paulson have been a big hit this fall, but we have even more exciting projects that are in various stages of review and planning. The pre-plan study for one major project that will positively impact all 17 of our teams concludes this week. We look forward to sharing some exciting news in the near future about this project (and another large one) that combined are the most ambitious athletic facility projects since Paulson was built.

Last, but not least, **THANK YOU** Eagle Nation for your unwavering support this year! I take great pride in us being one of only four schools in the country slated to play a full season of 12 football games. Your continued encouragement – through good times and bad – is one of the many reasons why I share with people that we have the best and most passionate fans in the country. Thank you for making Georgia Southern such a special place!

I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season and I look forward to seeing all of you in 2021!

Hail Southern and GATA!



Jared Benko
Georgia Southern Director of Athletics

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